

*By the Author*

A SERIOUS  
ADDRESS  
TO THE  
FREQUENTERS  
OF  
PLAY-HOUSES.

OR RATHER,  
SERIOUS MOTIVES

To draw People to a just Consideration of  
the *Folly, Sin and Danger* of *encouraging,*  
and *being present* at those *unlawful Assem-*  
*blies.*

Earnestly recommended to *Parents, Matrons, Guar-*  
*dians, Mistresses of Boarding-Schools* ---- and all  
others whom it may concern.

To which is added,  
Poetical ADVICE to *Great Britain and Ireland.*

---

*Felix quem faciunt aliena pericula cautum.*

---

LONDON printed: And,  
DUBLIN: Re-printed and sold by the Booksellers  
and Hawkers. MDCCCLX.  
[ Price Three Pence. ]





A S E R I O U S  
A D D R E S S .

**T**HE Design of publishing the following Lines at this remarkable Juncture, calls for no other Apology for their being thus publickly address'd to every sober and considerate Mind, than what its own Weight and Importance most justly makes. The Cause it espouses is VIRTUE and INNOCENCE; and the Practice it exposes, is quite the Reverse. The Detection of the One, and the Advancement of the Other, is what every serious Mind will, and every rational and accountable Being should, endeavour to forward and promote.

If it is true (as a learned and eminent Divine of our Church says) That “ *Plays* are generally calculated for “ the *Meridian of VICE*, and to give a *Relish* to the “ *frothy Pleasures* of the *vain part* of Mankind”; and as they are of a *Pagan Original*, invented by *Heathen* for the *Honour* and *Worship* of their *Demons*—and that a *Play-house* too was by the modest and vertuous *Romans* denounced as a *Temple of Satan*—what can so detract from the Principles of a rational Creature, what sink him more into the Dregs of base Degeneracy, than for him to spend his precious Time in the deplorable Pursuit

Pursuit after that *Vanity* which is insipid in itself, sinful in its Pleasures — and above all, whose End is eternal Misery — I say, what can so far confirm the *Infatuation of the Devil*, than for a rational Creature, to keep his Mind lock'd up in empty Vanities, while his immortal Part (that *Ray of Light* proceeding from the infinite CREATOR of Heaven and Earth) is insensible, and unaffected even with its own Being? — What more beneath the Dignity of Human Nature, or below the Character of a *Christian*, than to see a Man pursue the *imaginary Happiness* of this Life, without considering the important Condition of standing at the general Audit, of receiving his Reward of being for ever happy with God, or for ever miserable with the Devil! — How, O Man canst thou bear thyself in such a State? — Wilt thou again resort to the *Play-house* for Comfort? Nay, but learn thou this Lesson first, That thou who pluckest thyself out of the Hand of God, mayst rest assur'd, *if thou perish, thy Blood shall be upon thine own Head.*

Ye Britons! ye Hibernians! ye Citizens of Dublin! my dear Countrymen! Why worship YE *false Gods*? Why introduce YE into your Cities, *Plays* and *heathen Games*? — Offer ye these Things as a *Token* of your *Thanksgiving* for the late memorable Deliverance of you out of the Hands of your Enemies? — Has the Edge of the Sword been blunted — the Appearance of Famine turned into Plenty — your Corn and Oil, your Harvests preserv'd? — and shall all these Blessings of the God of Love be requited in the *Celebration of Heathen Sports* and *Interludes*? — Was it for this (may it not be enquir'd) the *Hand of the LORD* was *stretched out to a rebellious, gainsaying People*? — Was it for this the Sword was stopt from going *through* our Land — the Plague among our Cattle stay'd — and the Staff of Life still retain'd among us? — Alas! such *Blessings* are enough to turn the very *Heathen* from the *Powers of Darkness* unto the *Service of the Living God* — And shall WE, who dare usurp the Sacred Character of *Christians*, be so *dead*, so *stupid*, so *ungrateful*, nay, so *heathenish*, as to cast such an *Odium* on our most holy Religion, our Laws, and the Honour of our Country,



try as to act beneath the Principles of those who will scarcely admit that there is a God?—Is it not plain, that *Christian Virtue* must certainly be at a *low Ebb* when such Diversions are acted in *Contempt* of the *TRUE GOD*, and to ridicule *Sacred Things*, as were instituted by the *Heathens* in Honour of their *fictional Deities*?—An Actor (as *Tertullian* observes) was a kind of *Priest*, and the Theatre a *Temple*. — [ *N. B.* And may it not be fear'd that even at this Day the *Play house* passes for a *Temple* too, since it is generally more crowded than the *Church*, and its *Performances* more relish'd than a *Subject from the Pulpit*, deduced from the Authority of *Holy Writ*? Ye cannot deny it ]—And if we abide by the Testimony of *History*, we shall find that their *Tragedy* and *Comedy* (so call'd) were at first dedicated in *devotional Hymns* sung by the *Pagans* to their *Gods*. Nay *Plato* affirms, That “ the *Commemoration* of their “ *Demons* was celebrated with *Hymns*.” And at *Rome*, after a small Series of Years, their *Diversions* were distinguish'd by *Tragedy* and *Comedy*—but these corruptive Scenes were *Strangers* there while the *Roman Virtue* retain'd its *pristine Vigour*.—But what a direct *Mockery* of the *Holy, Wise, and True God* is there in the Celebration of those *heathen Diversions*? — And shall a *Christian Nation* so derogate from the *Rules of Decency* and *Godly Discipline*, as presumptuously to encourage a Set of People who retail to them the *Practice* and *Principles of Heathens*?—Forbid it, O thou *God, whose Eyes cannot behold Iniquity*!—Reader! Thou art commanded of *God*, yea, the only *True God*, *Him that sitteth in Heaven, who is able to kill and make alive, at whose Presence the Heaven and the Earth flee away, to make no Mention of the Names of other Gods*, (Exod. xxiii. 13) And thus saith the *LORD*, (Jer. x. 13.) *Learn not the Way of the Heathen, for the Customs of the People are vain*—I therefore, flee I thou, as thou wouldst devouring Fire, the Sinner that should hereafter offer to entice thee to break the *Laws* and *Commandments* of *God*, lest he whet his *Sword*, and be avenged on such a Nation as that thou dwellest in.

Moreover, to rivet in thy Mind a still juster abhorrence

rence of the *accursed Practices* of the *Heathens*, the *Play-house* is that *Sink of Iniquity*, where, in the *Representations* of *Fornication* and *Adultery*, all the *whole Body* of the *People* are *mentally* so—and as one has it, “ many who, it may be, came clean to the *Play*, return *Adulterers* and *Fornicators* (in their *Hearts*) from the *Theatre*.” — And it were well worth the while of virtuous *Parents*, *Gurdiens*, &c. to consider with an eminent and good Man, That “ *All pompous Diversions* “ are dangerous to a *Christian Life*, but none more so “ than *Plays*; for they give so nice and natural a Representation of the *Passions*, that they soon affect the “ *Heart*, especially with that of *dishonourable Love*, when “ represented as chaste and innocent; for the more innocent it appears, the more easily it insinuates itself. “ Hence it is, too many go from the *Play* so charm’d “ with the *Pleasures of Love*, that they are prepar’d to “ put in *Practice* what *Immodesties* they saw represented “ there.” For as *Minutius Felix* expresses it, “ sometimes a luscious Actor shall whine you into Love, and “ give the *Disease* he counterfeits.”

Now ye tender *Parents*, *Guardians*, &c. can ye view this and not to be mov’d? Will ye not from *this* resolve to build your *Discipline* upon *wiser* Motives than heretofore? Will you let those under your Care, and Inspection, henceforth ever receive a *Play Ticket* more, or ever suffer them to enter a *Play-house* during the Time at least they are under your special Direction? Surely you will not, lest God should suddenly require the *Souls* of such Persons at your Hands.

It is the Opinion of some of the most learned Sages of the heathen Times, as well as the Primitive Fathers, and some modern Divines, That *Play-houses* are, The *Fountains* and *Nurseries* of all *Wickedness*, wheresoever they are permitted.—And there is not a little Reason to fear, That as the *Players* are permitted from Place to Place in this Kingdom, they will, in Time, metamorphose the whole Country into *heathen Idolatry*. It is therefore melancholy to see, that any M—e, or J—e of the P—e, CAN so far swerve from the *Tenour* of their *Commission*, the Honour of their GOD, their  
King

*King and Country*, as to *permit* them to take Footing near the Borders of any City or Town, in open Defiance too of the Laws *lately* made to suppress them, by Virtue of which a Magistrate is impower'd to send them to the *House of Correction* if they are found even to exhibit so much as a *Part* of any *Play, Prologue, or Epilogue*, much less to dare to exhibit whole Plays in common Form, in Contempt of all Authority — To what Effect is it to make Laws, choose Magistrates, Ministers of Justice, Constables, and other Officers, if those Laws and the Oaths of such Persons are merely *formal*? — Is the Sword given in *vain*? — What! shall the *heathen Assemblies* be countenanced amidst a (supposed) *serious, Protestant, Christian* People! — a People who enjoy the glorious Privileges of the Gospel, under a mild auspicious Reign, in the *invaluable* Dispensation of *Liberty of Conscience*! — a People bless'd and enrich'd with all that Life calls dear, and yet deny the Greatness of those Blessings by the open and common *Practice of Evil*, and *worshipping false Gods* — echoing to and countenancing those Diversions which the virtuous *Heathens* extruded their Cities and Towns, as the great *Incentives* to *Lewdness* and *Debauchery*, and denounced the Practice thereof as the very *Idolization of Demon Deities*? — Oh! what a Sight must it be to see a virtuous *Youth* of either Sex (but especially the *Fair* one) in a *Conventicle of Vice* — whose Composition is that of *Rakes, Bullies, Fiddlers, Dancers and Players*! — where Vice is represented in *Jest*, and afterwards practis'd in *good Earnest*! — where the Allurements of the Stage insensibly insinuates into the *unwary* and *tender* Mind, and soon renders *insipid* the Adornments of *Vertue*, stirring up in them the *Fuel of Lust*, and at last (in all Probability) prove the melancholy Overthrow both of Body and Soul!

Oh! my Countrymen, if we value ourselves as Men of *Reason* and *Understanding*, let us not wilfully derogate from the *Principles* thereof, but submit to those *Convictions* which the *Consequence* momentarily *confirms* to be *divine*. — If by *Reason* we allow that its Effect is a steady uniform *Light* that *shines* in the *Minds of Men* —  
a divine

a *divine Touchstone*, by which Men are enable to discern the Congruity and Incongruity of Propositions; and thereupon to pronounce them true or false, then let us not deny the Authority of incontestible Facts, as they occur in the Prosecution of the End aim'd at in this little Treat; and if I mistake not, it will contain enough to dissuade any reasonable Creature from any longer pursuing those Things, of which he has now great Occasion to be ashamed.

Men and Brethren. If you actually believe in the Existence of God—in Him that *sitteth on the Circle of the Heavens*, and ruleth all Things like a God indeed!—*at whose Presence the Hills melt like Wax*—who burneth up his Enemies round about him—who *measurcth the Waters in the Hollow of his Hand*—and is from *Everlasting to Everlasting*!—that by him all Things move and have their Being—in whom there is no Shadow of Turning or Alteration—a Being absolutely perfect, glorious and unchangeable—the *Alpha and Omega*, the *Beginning and the Ending*—the everlasting Self-existing Power—who *stretcheth out the Heavens as a Curtain*—who is the *righteous Judge*, the Almighty Dispenser of Rewards and Punishments—whose Eyes run to and fro the Earth, and which cannot behold Iniquity:—who seeth all Things, and knoweth the secret Thoughts and Intents of the Heart—who searcheth Jerusalem as with a Candle—and spieth out all our Ways—who by the Influence of his Holy Spirit hath given us to know his Rules and Ordinances instituted for our mutual Decorum, and that wilfully to break them, endangers our Sequestration from God—I say, upon this Hypothesis, can a Man pretend to found his Principle of *right Reason*, and not think he must be answerable to God, the Supreme Law-giver, for his own particular Conduct, in every Branch of such Duties as result from the Belief and Sense of general Truths display'd in Sacred Writ, and manifested to every Man's Conscience? Certainly, as my own Existence is a Self-evident Principle that my immaterial Substance is a Part of the *invisible Being*, and made capable of enjoying the Love and Felicity of God, surely then I ought not to degenerate from the Dignity of my



my Nature, but act upon those *Rules* and *Duties* which *divine Reason* points out to me, namely, to consider that the Relation we stand in toward God, requires our *Acknowledgment*, *Gratitude*, *Love* and *Dependence*, and in one World, our *humblest Adoration* of his *infinite Perfections*. And from whence we cannot but allow, that the *Breach* of any of these *Rules* is a *Breach* of the *Law* of God, an *Offence* against the *Supreme Law giver*, a most high *Indignity* upon the *Majesty* of God, and a plain Demonstration that the *pretended Rules of Reason* and *Divinity*, are but so many empty Names, *sounding Brass*, and *Tinkling Cimbals*.

I would now then advise every *pretended Rationalist* to consider the Inconsistency of numbering himself among Persons of that Character, whereas his *Practices* are directly opposite, as he denies the *Precepts* and *Prohibitions* of his GOD. — Nay, he is an *Enemy* to Christianity, a *Heathen* in Fact, an *Idolater*, a *Pagan*, one who has not the least Regard to *Virtue*, but basely degenerated into a Life unbecoming the *Name* or *Character* of a *Christian*; a Partaker of those *gross Obscenities*, those *lying*, *unprofitable Diversions*, where *Vice* gets an *easy Passage* to his *Heart*; and, from an *Idea* reduced into *Action*, sunk from the *Man of Reason* into the Principles of a *brute Beast*—and then *Impiety* becomes his *Heaven*!

Oh! ye *Rationalists* do you ever permit your *Reason* to co-operate with the Standing *Rules* of the *Word of GOD*? if not your Knowledge is *Ignorance* to the last Degree—ye are a *self wise*, *stiff-necked* People, and *self-inconsistent* even with your own *Principles*. For what can be more absurd, than for a Man to set aside the Principles deduced from *Divine Revelation*, and embark on the Principles of a *Rationalist*, and yet act *retrograde* to the very *Motives* of *Reason*, by *breaking the Laws of GOD*, and entering the List of *Debauchees*, *Buffoons*, *Fidlers*, *Players*! and all the Tribe of *diabolical*, *profane* Persons, whose *Practices* are said to be *invented by THE DEVIL*, it being Part of the *Worship* he requir'd of them, and which were *consecrated* to the *Honour*, and *appropriated* to *HIS Service* by *HIS* special Direction?—For Shame, thou *Rationalist*, no more  
be

immers'd in *Luxury* and *Darkness*—no more lend thine *helping Hand* to fill up the *Measure of the Nation's Iniquity*, but *turn thou unto CHRIST*, the *blessed and immaculate Lamb*, who *died for thy Sins*, and *rose again for thy Justification*, and *through whose Death thou mayst be a Partaker of those Rivers of Pleasure that flow at GOD's Right Hand for ever more!*

But to hasten forward, I proceed next to shew, that the frequenting of Plays is the Celebration of *heathen Idolatry*, and a direct Affront to the Majesty of GOD.

Plays in their first Design were invented to pacify the Anger of the Gods, as *Jupiter, Bacchus, Neptune, Flora, Apollo, Diana, Venus*, or some other *Dunghill Idol*, which the Pagans ador'd—to whose Honour, Names and Memories they were celebrated, as appears from the Writings of the Antients, as well as from the concurrent Testimonies of the primitive Christian Fathers.—And how deplorable is it to see this *Christian Isle* (which was once the Glory of the World) scandalously crowded with *Pagan Deities*, and the SUPREME BEING often reviled, through the ill Language that is generally given to them?——Though GOD forbids us to *make Idols*, or swear by them, yet what more common in Plays than, in Contempt of the SACRED ORACLES, to implore the Aid of *Jove, Juno, Apollo, Bacchus, Minerva!*——than to *swear by Jove! by Mars! by Venus!*—*Oh! ye Powers! Oh! ye Gods!*—Now all these are *feignitious Deities*, and the Practice of our Actors herein, is a direct Imitation of the Heathens, who supplicated their departed Heroes as Gods, commonly in their Poems and Interludes. The foul Obscenities with which their devotional Hymns and Plays were generally intermix'd, render'd 'em odious to the thinking Part of Mankind even in those dark Ages.—And what Heathen, possess'd only with mortal Vertues, (so call'd) would not be asham'd of our Country where *Heathenism* is so nicely retail'd, inasmuch as the very *heathen Idols* are invoc'd in direct Contempt of the GOD of HEAVEN! and countenanced too by the (would be thought) wise and reasonable Part of our Nation, under the Character of *innocent Diversions and Amusements!*

fit

fit to chase away *Melancholy* ! and to kill the *tedious* Hours withal ! turning the *Day into Night*, and the *Night into Day* !—while the Rules of *Religion*, *Charity* and *Love* are in a Manner extruded the Face of the Earth.

But that the Reader may no longer be kept from coming to the thing more ardently propos'd, proceed we now to produce the Opinion of the *Heathens*, as well as the *Fathers* and some *modern* and eminent *Divines*, on his Head.

*Plato* (about the 325th Year of *Rome*) would suffer no Plays in his Commonwealth, because it was *dangerous to Morality*.

*Aristotle* (born about 384 Years before *CHRIST*) forbade the seeing of Comedies to young People, because it would *poison their Minds*.

*Xenophon* (who lived in the 105th Olympiad) commends the *Persians* for not suffering their Youth to hear Comedies.

*Tully* declains against Plays and licentious Poems, as *The Plague of Society*; and blames *Trabea* and *Cæcilius*, two Comic Poets, for magnifying *Love Adventures*, making *Cupid* a *God*, and flourishing too much on the Satisfaction of Sense : He complains also of Tragedy, how, in many Instances it *baffles the Force of Vertue*.

*Valerius Maximus* look'd upon the permitting of Plays as a *Blemish to the Roman State*.

*Tacitus* complains how the *Roman Vertue* and *Discipline* had been *corrupted* by the *Stage*; and how whole Nights were taken up by those Plays, and *no Time left to be honest*. He inveighs much against *Nero* for introducing all Kinds of *Vice* by Stage-plays.

*Plutarch* in his *Morals*, does not only condemn Plays as *lascivious Vanities*, and *contagious Evils*, but *Poetry* itself as full of *Lies*; and quotes *Socrates* as a *Voucher*.

*Ovid*, that wanton Poet, informs *Augustus*, that Play-houses are the *Nurseries of all Wickedness*, and the *Congress of Adulterers*. In his Poem *de Arte Amandi*, he tells his vicious Associates, that the Play-houses were the best *Fairs* for unchaste Bargains, the most commodious Haunts for amorous Fellows, and only Places for *Panders* and *Whores*—[*Hear ye this ye modest Fair* !]—  
Then

Then adds, " 'Twas impossible for *Parents* or *Husbands* to keep their *Children* and *Wives* chaste, while Plays were suffer'd in the City," Lib. 3. In another Place he advises all those who would live chaste, to withdraw from the Play-house, and to throw away all *Play-books* and *amorous Poems*.

*Propertius*, an obscene Poet, cries out against the *Theatres*, as the *Instruments* of his Ruin.

*Isocrates*, a Greek Orator, exclaims against all Actors and Players, as *scurrilous* and *mischievous*, and *intolerable Plagues* to a City.

C. *Plinius Secundus* stiles Stage-plays *effeminate Arts*, altogether unbecoming Men, and applauds the Emperor *Trajan* for banishing them out of the *Roman Empire*.

*Solon*, one of the wisest Men of Greece, condemn'd Plays, as *Evils not to be suffer'd in a City*.

Many more *Heathens* might be produced, as *Quintilian*, *Macrobius*, *Juvenal*, *Horace*, *V. Paternulus*, *Diod. Siculus*, &c. but these are sufficient to shew, in what Repute VERTUE was among some of them, and how they *abhor'd* the Stage, as an *Enemy to all Good*. — "And shall the Followers of the crucified JESUS (adds a certain pious and Reverend Author) countenance these *Theatrical Entertainments*, which *Heathens* censur'd as the *Plague of Societies*, and *Ruin of common Morality*?" — Forbid it, O thou GOD of GODS, and LORD of LORDS! Rather let the uplifted Thunderbolt be again resum'd; rather let us die than *sist* the *Convictions of Conscience*, or again tread the Temples of the *Pagan Gods*! — Oh! let the *Frequenters* of those *Synagogues of Satan* be sensible of their *Rebellion* against Thee, in whom alone is comprized all the Pleasure and Glory of eternal Happiness.

The great *Lactantius*, who liv'd A. D. 303. speaking of Plays, says, " They only serve to excite Lust, and " the more *artful* the Actors are in the *Representations*, " the more *Mischief* they do."

*Tertullian* calls the Play-house the Sink of Debauchery, the Chapel of Venus, or a Bawdy-house; [and will the modest Virgins and modest Wives of England, Ireland, &c. go there?] and that as many Persons as sit in the Play-house



house, so many unclean spirits are present. This Father gives an Account of a Christian Woman, who, going to the Play-house, was there possessed of the Devil; and when, at his casting out, he was ask'd by the Exorcist, How he durst enter into a Christian? he answer'd, *I found her upon my Ground!*—He tells us of Danger in the best-complexion'd Entertainments of the Stage; look therefore, adds he, upon all the engaging and pleasing Sentences, as *Honey dropping from the Bag of a Toad.*

*Clemens Alexandrinus*, who liv'd A. D. 192, declares against Stage-plays, as *Schools of Impiety, pestilent Sports, and Introductions to all Kinds of Immorality.*

*St. Chrysostom* reproves the People of *Antioch* for their resorting to Play-houses, which he styles the *Devil's Conventicles*; and says the Stage-plays are the *Devil's Poms, Fables of Satan, Demonical Assemblies, impure Food of the Devil*—[And will ye, ye vertuous Christians, be fed with this Food — Rather seek ye the Bread that cometh down from Heaven. — Beware, lest your Eyes catch a Blast, and ye make a Covenant with eternal Death!] Nay, ye not only see, but hear unclean Words and obscene Songs—[which to young Misses of Boarding-Schools, &c. must be fine Diversion!]—Where, for Goodness Sake, is now your boasted Reason?—even the Dictates of common Morality are too strong for you. —Now if neither the Rules of Reason, Morality, or Christianity, be your Guide here, what a shocking Figure must you make when the Secrets of all Hearts shall be open, and you are call'd upon to give an Account of the Things done in the Body, and to receive your Reward accordingly?—But is not your nice Nature yet offended?—then let me intreat you no longer give yourself up to the inticing Snares of the Devil, but earnestly cry unto God, to take away the Evil from your Heart, and never go near such Places more.

It is indeed a true Saying of *Isodore Pelusiota*, who flourish'd about the Year 412, That their, (i. e. the Play-houses) End is to draw Men into Sin.

*Gregory Nazianzen*, who flourish'd A. D. 370, says, that they are the Propagators of all Lewdness, and that the Play-house is the *Wanton's-Shop.*

And *Salvian*, Bp. of *Marseilles*, says, “ Plays are the  
 “ *Deluders of our Hopes, Cheats of Life, and Repast of the*  
 “ *Devil*: for there the *Salvation* of Christian People  
 “ is destroyed and the *Majesty of GOD profaned*; by  
 “ *sacrilegious Superstitions*; the *Heathen Deities* are sub-  
 “ *stituted* to all their *Pastimes*; — in the one Place there  
 “ is *Immodesty* — in another *Lasciviousness* — in another  
 “ *Madness* — and the *Devil in them all*; — nay, all  
 “ the *Devils in Hell* (adds this Author) are in every one  
 “ of the Places of these *Pastimes*; for they *preside over*  
 “ the Places dedicated to their *Worship*.”

By the *African Code* (or *Starute Laws*) it appears,  
 that Stage-players were rank'd among *Apostates*. The  
*Women Actors* were counted so *scandalous*, that whoever  
 married any of them, made himself incapable of  
 being a *Clergyman* by the *Apostolical Canon*.

The 6th Council of *Constantinople*, which consisted  
 almost of *Bishops*; the 2d *Nicene Council*, held about  
 785, where were present 3 or 400 *Bishops*; the *Lateran*  
*Council*, *A. D.* 1215, consisting of *Two Patriarchs*, 70  
*Arch-bishops*, 400 *Bishops*, and 800 *Abbots and Priors*,  
*universally condemn Plays and Interludes*, and all *Thea-*  
*trical Sports*; and it is the wise *Observation* of another  
 antient Council (as well as *Precept* for both *Clergy* and  
*Laitie* of all Countries) That “ it better becomes *Holy*  
 “ Men to *mourn*, than *laugh* at *foolish Speeches* and  
 “ *obscene Jest*s of Stage-players.”

And among the many *Opinions* of the *Sons* of the  
*Church of ENGLAND*, are the following:

*Dr. Parker*, Arch-bishop of *Canterbury*, condemns  
*Plays* in his Book *de Antiq. Eccl. Brit.*

*Dr. G. Alley*, Bishop of *Exeter*, and *Divinity Lec-*  
*turer* of *St Paul's*, in the 2d Year of *Queen Elizabeth*,  
 declares with great Warmth against Stage-plays, as the  
*Fuel of Lust, Occasion of Adultery*, and other *intollerable*  
*Evils*. *Lond.* 1571.

*Dr. Beard* of *Huntingdon*, and *Dr. Taylor*, the famous  
*Preacher* of *Aldermanbury*, speaking of *Plays, &c.* say,  
 “ They have no other Use but to deprave and corrupt  
 “ good

“ good Manners, and *open a Door to all Uncleanness.* —  
 “ The Holy Scripture is often by these *filthy Swine*  
 “ profaned. \*

Archbishop *Usher*, (that most noble Pattern of Piety and Learning) speaking of Interludes and Stage-Plays, says, “ They offend against the 7th Commandment in “ several Instances, besides the Wantonness therein used “ in Attire, Speech and Action.” He says, “ They “ that go to see Sights, hear such Words, shew their “ Neglect of Christian Duty, and Carelessness in Sining, “ whenas they *willingly* commit themselves into the “ *Snare of the Devil.* Vid. *Body of Divinity*, 1702.

Arch-bishop *Tillotson*, Bishop *Kennett*, Dr. *Bray*, Dr. *Horneck*, one and all, inveigh greatly against Plays and Interludes; and Bishop *Tillotson* in particular speaks very warmly on the Subject—speaking of some Parents, says, “ They are such *Monsters*, I had almost said, *Devils*, “ as not to know how to give good Things to their “ Children.——Instead of bringing them to God’s “ Church, they bring them to the *Devil’s Chapels*, to “ *Play houses*, and *Places of Debauchery*, those SCHOOLS “ and NURSERIES of *Lewdness* and *Vice.* Vid. his *Serm. on Education of Children*, p. 153, 154.

From these Quotations it appears (though abundance more might be collected) that both in heathen Times

B 2

and

\* *To the Support of this we need only revise the Catalogue of French Plays in the Gent. Mag. for April 1746, where the Reader will find, when The Commemoration of the Virgin Mary; The Mystery of the Navity; The Mystery of St. John the Baptist; The Comedy of the Adoration of the Three Kings to Jesus Christ; and many other Sacred Themes, were the Drolls of public Stage-players, Fiddlers, Dancers, Buffoons.*——*Tiberius, none of the best of Emperors, condemn’d all Players to the Whipping-post and then banished them out of Italy, as unsufferable Evils. Tacit. An. l. 1*——*Augustus too, order’d the Players to be whipped, and afterwards exiled, as intollerable Plagues to a State. Hylas & Pylas, Suet. Octav. Sect. 45. p. 82, 83.*

and when the Gospel also had had diffus'd itself abroad, this *pestilential Disease* touch'd the several Borders of both Havens; and it is demonstrable to a Truth, That the antient Heathens and Christians (as well those of modern Date) look'd upon the Entertainments of the Stage, as both *shameful* and *dangerous*.—And shall a Country like *this* (so immediately under the Eye of God) countenance such scandalous Productions of *Heathenism*; *throw Dirt in the Face of the Almighty*, for their late signal Deliverance; and *do Despite to the Majesty of God*;— I trust not, but that one and all will stand up to *put the Laws in Execution*, and extrude those Monsters of Iniquity from the Borders of our Country.— Let us assist the Magistrate in doing that Duty, to the Discharge whereof he is bound by the Laws of the Land.—Let us call upon the proper Officers, who break their Oath, (and forfeit *Ten Pounds* by an Act of Queen Ann) if they do not present all *Seminaries of Vice* and *Immorality* to the Quarter Sessions of the City or County where these *Apostates* shall dare to intrench themselves:—Let us begin *now* to put our Hand to *this Plough*:—Let us suppress not only *Players*, but also those other *Cursed Sinks of Iniquity*, the *BAWDY-houses*, *Gaming-houses*, *Skittle-Allies* (those other *Nurseries of the Devil*)—punish their Keepers, as also the open and profane *Swearer* and *Sabbath-breaker*, without Distinction. Begin at the *Head*; *shaming* all Degrees of Men as we go on, by making Examples of our *Favourites* and *Friends* FIRST.—Let not the Sword be held in vain; but ardently press upon *Justice* to stretch forth its Hand towards a *general Reformation*.— Let not the present *new Law* against *Swearing* be made in *vain*, but each Man watch his Brother, and punish the Guilty, as he will answer the same before God.—Let us like *true Lovers* of the blessed Jesus, join Hands heartily in this laudable Undertaking; and let no Man be *asham'd* of the Honour of God, lest he be *denied* at the last Day, according to the Tenour of the Sacred Writ.

But alas! upon a melancholy Reflection, what Success can we hope for, when all these flagrant Abominations are so *openly* practis'd, and receive so *open* a Sanction



tion from those whose Business it is to suppress them; who instead of becoming *Patterns* of *Vertue*, are too often *themselves* unhappily found running with the *Vulgar* (in *Contempt* too of their *solemn, baptismal Vow*) into the *Pomps, Vanities, and Wickedness* of a base degenerate Age?—But supposing no Man were to gain the least Prevalency over the indigent Transcript of *mock Vicegerency*, who *will* be the deaf Adder, the corroborate *Abbettors* to a Nation's Guilt, yet 'tis hop'd, the following pathetick Lines will not lose their *Vertue*, among the *wise and sober Part* of Mankind, if perus'd without Prejudice, and apply'd with Meekness and conscientious Impartiality. They are the Words of an eminent Divine, who upon the same Principles of this Editor, did once embark toward tracing out some Footsteps of a general Reformation. After he has briefly recited the *Blasphemies and Immoralities* of the Stage, he concludes—" To sum up all—to attend these ludicrous and obscene Shews, and take Pleasure therein, is unbecoming the Man, the Gentleman and the Christian.—How unbecoming the Dignity of a rational Nature, to act the Part of a Buffoon, or to be pleas'd with those who do so? What Violence does he offer to the Reason of Mankind, who represents *Vice* as fashionable and genteel? And what a sorry mean Soul actuates that Man who makes these ludicrous Actions the Ingredients of his Pleasures? What a Diminution to the Honour of Gentlemen (who by Birth are design'd for Offices of State) to go to Childrens Plays, at the Expence of so much Time and Money, and all for the Diversi- on of a little Laughter, rais'd by Buffoons, Vagabonds, Jesters, Strollers, Dancers, Fiddlers, Players, who go about to *poison* the Mind and Morals of the Nation, and to teach People to *whore* and *swear* the shortest Way.

" What a pretty Figure does my Gentleman make when he stands bare-headed before a parcel of *Scoundrel Actors*, who are *infamous* by the Laws of the *Gentiles*, as well as those of *England*, and whose Office at best is only to excite rude and excessive Mirth,

“ and clownish Laughter in the Audience, without the  
 “ least Pretence to moral Instruction?— Gentlemen  
 “ generally are (*or should be*) Men of Politeness and  
 “ good Taste;—how ridiculous is it to see these mix  
 “ with the Dregs of the People, who have no relish of  
 “ Decency and Honour in their rustick Acclamations?  
 “ How awkward a Figure does the *grinning Gentleman*  
 “ make, when the *Modesty* of his *Lady* (and *all her*  
 “ *Sex*) is attack’d by *impudent Actors*?—To see the  
 “ *Christian* in the Play-house, that *Conventicle of Vice*  
 “ is yet more shocking!—What! thou a *Christian*, and  
 “ a *Spectator* of those *wanton Pastimes* and *Actions* that  
 “ constitute the greatest Part of some Plays?—What  
 “ thou a *Christian*, a Member of the Church, and fre-  
 “ quent the Play-house, that *School of Darkeness*, and  
 “ *Rendezvous of Debauchees*?—With What Pleasure  
 “ can Ladies and Gentlemen of Vertue, associate with  
 “ these?—With what Face dare you behold the *Holy*  
 “ *Temple*, who *defile* your *Eyes* with being Spectators  
 “ of *vain* and *wanton Shows*?—With what *Conscience*  
 “ can you approach the Sacred Table one Day, and  
 “ run to the Play-house the next, whose Entertain-  
 “ ment is *Smut*?—And give me Leave to add, May  
 not the Practice thereof be justly deem’d, *wilful Rebel-*  
*lion against God*? or at least an *Infatuation of the De-*  
*vil*?—Ye Parents, ye Guardians, ye Matrons, ye  
*pretended Rationalists*! no longer derogate from your  
 boasted Principles, but break off from these wicked  
 Practices *yourselves*, lest the *unclean Spirit* carry you  
 from the *Play-house* to the *Masquerade*, which is the  
 “ very Dregs of Baseness, and which sink the Honour  
 “ of Human Nature to the *lowest Ebb of INFAMY*.”

But oh! who can proceed to describe the dark Scenes  
 transacted there, and not tremble!—Who can think  
 of the vile and destructive Assignations there, without  
 being seiz’d with Horror!—and who is so hard of Heart  
 as not to lament the Inauguration of so *damnable a Vice*  
 into this Kingdom!—so shocking to human Nature, to  
 Vertue, to common Honesty, without smiting upon his  
 Breast at the Degeneracy of so noble a People!—We  
 borrow’d this pompous Diversion also from *Pagans*, and  
 in

in *acting* it, says a modern Divine, we are *worse* than Pagans: For *Masquerades* were *invented* by *Heathens* in Honour of their *false Gods*.—but among *Christians*, how is the awful, TRUE GOD dishonour'd by the promiscuous Congress of *Masqueraders*, whose nocturnal Revels, if not restrain'd, will prove of the utmost Fata- lity to this Nation: For certainly GOD will not suffer his Honour much longer to be laid in the Dust by the *Insolence* of his *Creature*. “It is a Pastime utterly un- lawful, being a *Congress* to an *unclean End*; not a *My- stery* of Iniquity, but an *open Scene* of *outrageous* and *flaming Debauchery*; where Temptation is passionately courted, and the wanton Imagination indulged to the last Degree, so that none who go there *return* from thence *chaste* and *innocent*.—[What think you of this, ye *render* Husbands, Parents, &c ?]—The most vertuous and resolute Mind is by Degrees soften'd, and at last dissolved into Sensuality: These are the *common* and *sad* Effects of the amorous Intreagues, and those *luscious Indecencies* (heighten'd by the *Inchant- ments* of *Musick*) usually practised by *Masqueraders*.” —Nay, this judicious Author asserts, that “it is not “long ago, since a certain Gentleman, who frequent- “ed those Plays, *debauched* HIS OWN DAUGHTER; but “when the *Mask* was thrown off, and she appear'd to “be his *own Child*, what Rage, Vexation and Anguish “possess'd the miserable Father, who liv'd under hor- “rible Convulsions in his Mind, and at last died with “great Terror and Distraction.”—Now, ye *indulgent Mothers*, ye *Matrons*, *Tutors*, and all who must here- after render an Account of your Deeds, to *You* again I speak, What Tongue can express, or Mind conceive, the Depth of the Iniquity of this (*now*) *English* and *Irish Malady*!——But again----Is not DANCING too of *Heathen Institution*, and the *first Step* to these De- bauched Scenes? It was common with *Pagans*, in their Solemnities and Festivals, to honour their *Idols* with *Dances* and *antick Postures*; hence it is we read of their *dancing Priests*, as the *Corybantes*, *Salii*, *Cure- tes*, &c. Therefore the Practice of *Dancing*, is scan- dalous

dalous in its *Nature*, and hath *Poison* in its *Constitution* —and what an absurd and disingenuous Practice is it, to *celebrate* a glorious Enterprize with *Dancing*, *Fiddling*, and *Bag-piping*! —to entertain a ——— blest'd with Success from on High, with *Plays*, *Balls*, and *Masquerading*, instead of a *Thanksgiving*: — Oh! my Country! how long wilt thou provoke an *angry* God! —Remember, *The Sword is yet unsheath'd*; War is not yet withdrawn from thy Borders; —and how knowest thou, but *Famine* and *Pestilence*, will at length be thine *horrible Destination*! Oh! then, repent, repent, that ye drink not the *Cup of the Lord's Fury at his Hand*!

## A D V I C E





A D V I C E  
T O  
G R E A T - B R I T A I N ,  
A N D  
I R E L A N D .





## A D V I C E, &c.

**T**HE Day is come !— Day of Rebuke and Scorn ;  
The Cities tremble, and the Countries mourn.  
Our Crimes have reach'd celestial Seats on high,  
And at the Throne supreme for Vengeance cry.  
Here *Science* long her choicest Store display'd,  
And *Wisdom* in our Streets, with Light array'd,  
Has cry'd aloud, “ O *Britain* ! hear my Voice,  
My Call's to you, I in your Bliss rejoice :  
The Path to Health I shew, of Life impart ;  
I give true Pleasures, and enlarge the Heart.  
My Joy's sincere, unhurt by Change or Time ;  
Pure are my Views, and ev'ry Thought sublime ;  
Fit to improve, and raise the human Mind,  
For highest Deeds, and heav'ly Bliss design'd,”

But Woe the Day ! tho' *Wisdom*'s Voice invites,  
Calls to true Bliss and durable Delights ;  
Thro' out at the Land exults the thoughtless Soul,  
And boundless Riot reigns without Controul.  
Gay Pleasure charms, and strong attracts the Heart,  
And festal Joys their highest Gust impart.  
Luxurious Meals each Day with Wine unite,  
And studied Scenes of Sense engross the Night ;  
Dice, Cards, and heighten'd Mirth the Souls Delight ;  
Devoid of Thought, which *Wisdom*'s Voice inspires,  
Sunk in the Whirlpool of untam'd Desires.

From hence ! enormous Vice triumphs aloud,  
The beastly *Drunkard* bold harrangues the Crowd ;  
*Adultery* vile, *unmask'd*, insults the Land  
And with audacious Front, leud *Harlots* stand :

*Injustice*

*Injustice* fierce in ev'ry *Village* reigns,  
 In vain the *weak*, in vain the *wrong'd* complains.  
 That Sacred Mind, (which ever be ador'd!)  
 Our great Creator, and our Sov'reign LORD;  
 How is His Holy and tremendous Name  
 Torn by the lawless Crowd, *secure from Blame*!  
 Men now their *Neighbour* with fierce *Curses* load,  
 And *Hell* invoke to make those *Curses* good.  
 The bold *Blasphemer* vents his Hell-born Rage,  
 Insults his GOD, and dares with Heav'n engage.  
*HELL* opens wide to tame th'ath'istic Race,  
 The *Mist of Darknefs* their detested Place.

Did GOD for this exert Almighty Love?  
 Did CHRIST for this forsake the Realms above?  
 Did GOD for this his Hate to Vice declare?  
 And CHRRT the Weight of our Offences bear?  
 Was it for this celestial *Wisdom* cry'd?  
 Was it for this the World's kind Saviour dy'd?  
 Did GOD for this give *Britain* wide Command?  
 For this did *Knowledge* triumph in our Land?  
 — What Hopes remain, but Heav'n will on our Head  
 In righteous Wrath its fiercest *Curses* shed?  
 A dread Example, full expos'd to Sight,  
 Of Hate to Order, and Contempt of Light!  
 Thus *Salem* (where once GOD was pleas'd to dwell)  
 Is sunk, like *Sodom*, to the Gates of Hell;  
*Fullness of Bread*, *false Pride*, and *wanton Lust*,  
 Have laid its Glory in the abject Dust.

Rouse, *Britain*, rouse, from thy lethargic State,  
 With Tears and Pray'rs avert *impending Fate*;  
 In Sackcloth weep the Nation's sad Decay,  
 And all thy Crimes before thy Maker lay;  
 Let Priest and People at his Altar fall,  
 And prostrate, to our GOD for Mercy call;  
 Lament their Faults, from all their Vices turn,  
 And ev'ry hateful Deed in Ashes mourn;  
 That so our GOD may stay his righteous Wrath,  
 With-hold his Hand, tho' the dread Word's gone forth:  
Bid

Bid the Destroyer sheath th'avenging Sword,  
 Pity his People, and recall his Word :  
*This* can alone prevent the Wrathful Day,  
 Avert his Anger, his just Vengeance slay ;  
 Make him to hear our Sighs, our Groans attend,  
 And streaming Mercy to our Succour send ;  
 Once more be jealous to his weeping Land,  
 Forbid the Heathen in our Gates to stand ;  
 Command his Sun to dart its chearful Ray,  
 Bid him again his liv'ning Beams display ;  
 The noxious Vapour from our Country drive,  
 Renew our Cattle, give our Corn to thrive ;  
 Bid Joy once more to the faint Heart return,  
 And th' humble Soul no more its Sorrows mourn.

*Obedience* only can restore our Peace,  
 Dispel the Gloom, and make our Woes to cease ;  
 Give true Delight. — This *Ireland* shall be thine,  
 If with *Repentance* thou *Amendment* join ;  
 If thou, submits, to meet thy GOD wilt move  
 Calm Peace of Mind the contrite Heart shall prove,  
 And Souls obedient find their GOD *is Love*. }

F I N I S.



